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ABSTRACT

"Teacher Education for America's Minorities" (TEAM) is a project of seven institutions of higher education in Florida. The project's goal has been to work within the teacher education systems at the seven institutions over a 6-year period (1990-1996). This paper addresses some of the issues and strategies related to barriers in the pipeline, identifies strategies used in assisting nontraditional and community college transfer students make the transition to the university setting, and presents case studies on college retention and transfer issues affecting minority students in the Florida Community College System. All of the projects were funded by the Ford Foundation. Results of a survey of Black college students in relation to academic achievement are also presented. Barriers to minority student advancement include outmoded curricula and school structures, biased standardized tests, and financial constraints. The TEAM project begins in the middle schools to mentor minority students through school and into the workforce or toward postsecondary education. An actual case report illustrates the program. Each summer the program exposes promising minority high school students to college career opportunities and campus life; statewide recruitment initiatives and conferences are held periodically to encourage recruitment of these students and those already attending community colleges. Recruitment efforts include adequate tutorial assistance and developing students' self-concept. Survey findings indicate that Black college students need more assistance with library use, more study time versus working time, and improved perceptions of their own ability. (Contains 33 references.) (NAV)

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SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLEGE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION: CASE STUDIES

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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION

MINORITY TEACHER EDUCATION CONSORTIA

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR AMERICA'S MINORITIES - (TEAM) FLORIDA

ADDRESSING ISSUES IN THE PIPELINE

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

INSTRUMENTATION

ACE PROGRAM

CLOSURE/ DISCUSSION

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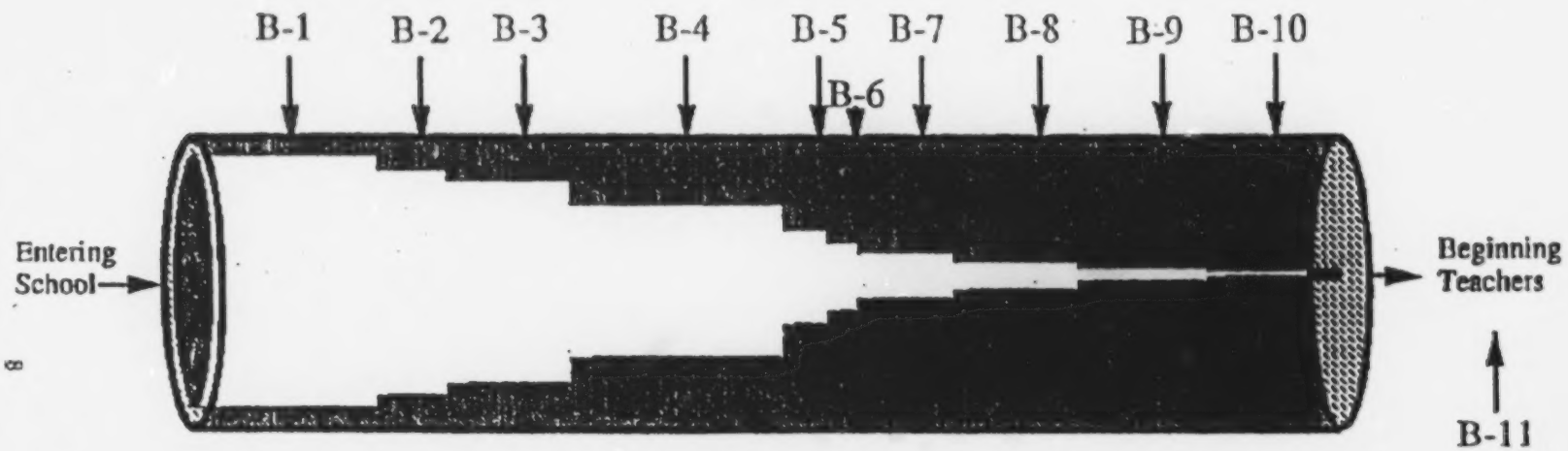
Teacher Education for America's Minorities

Barriers in the Pipeline



Barriers

B-1: K-3

B-2: 4th Grade

B-3: Middle School

B-4: High School

B-5: SAT/ACT
Graduation

B-6: Finances/Admission

B-7: Advisement/ Acceptance
Study Skills/ Self-management

B-8: CLAST/ SAT/ACT/ GPA
Admission to Teacher Education

B-9: Student Teaching
Job Seeking

B-10: FTCE

B-11: Beginning Teaching:
Professional Orientation
Programs

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY COLLEGE RETENTION: CASE STUDIES

"A society that reflects the full participation of all its citizens will be difficult to accomplish if only one in twenty teachers is a member of a minority group. At this rate, the average child will have only two minority teachers - out of about forty- during his or her K - 12 school years" (New Strategies for Producing Minority Teachers, 1990).

It is estimated that the minority student population is expected to approach 50 percent by the year 2000. Additionally, in 53 of the nation's largest cities, children of color will comprise the majority in student populations. The need for teachers of color in the United States has reached critical proportions. In 1970, minorities composed only 12 percent of our country's teachers. That percentage has been steadily declining, and according to some estimates, it may drop to 5 percent by the year 2000.

To address the critical need, the Ford Foundation has accepted the challenge to increase college and university capacities to recruit, educate, and certify increasing number of minority teachers. One such initiative, commonly referred to as TEAM (Teacher Education for America's Minorities) Project, includes five public universities-- the University of Central Florida, the University of Florida, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Florida State University, and the University of North Florida and two private institutions-- Bethune Cookman College and Edward Waters College. The project's goal is to work within the teacher education systems at the seven institutions over a six year period (1990-1996) in order to increase the number of certified minority teachers in Florida's schools.

This paper seeks to initially address some of the issues and strategies related to barriers in the pipeline, to identify strategies employed in assisting nontraditional and community college transfer students to the university setting, and, lastly present case

studies on college retention and transfer issues affecting minority students in the Florida Community College System. All of the studies were funded, in part, through a generous grant from the Ford Foundation.

Addressing Issues Related to the Pipeline:

"Many schools, including those with predominantly minority student bodies, continue to operate with outmoded curricula and structures based on the assumption that only a small elite will have or need to have some substantial academic success. The problem our children face in and out of the classroom---racism, poverty, language differences, and cultural barriers--- are not adequately addressed in today's typical school" (Quality Education for Minorities Project, 1990).

One of the goals of minority teachers through the TEAM-Florida project was to identify the pipeline barriers that inhibit minority students progress. As described by Hansen, Gardner, Jackson, and Mullins (1993), these barriers are many and varied, and each one clogs the teacher education pipelines for America's minorities. As seen in Figure 1, these barriers include standardized tests, finances / admission to the university / colleges, admission to teacher education programs, and induction into the teaching profession. To avoid this, Hansen et. al. observed, the profession must attack this pipeline at several points: "... the K- 12 experiences that may serve to 'turn students off,' college admission difficulties, first two years ... each of these issues must be addressed."

Need For Positive Role Models

According to the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986), schools form children's opinions about the larger society and their own futures. Further, the race and background of their teachers tells them something about authority and power in contemporary

Middle/ High School Mentoring Experience. A private/ public partnership aimed at keeping challenged high school students in school by stressing one- on- one mentoring, academics, personal development, wellness, scholarship, and employment was adopted by the TEAM Project. The ultimate goal of this partnership is to assist these students through school into the work force or toward post secondary education. Approximately, one-half of the TEAM Scholars are involved in the middle school and high school mentoring initiative. The Mentoring Project matches students one- on- one with volunteer mentors from government, educational, and business communities. Mentors meet weekly with these students providing support, academic and guidance assistance, and serving as role models for success. Other benefits that TEAM Scholars derived from this experience include:

a. Mentoring gives one an opportunity to give back to the community;

b. Mentoring allows one to help middle and high school students face everyday life's dilemmas;

c. Mentoring affords students in the Teacher Education program gain experience in tutoring;

d. Mentoring allows one to gain experience in handling personal situations with students and to know when to say, " enough is enough;"

e. Mentoring gives one experience in dealing with parents that are receptive to what one is doing and not so receptive to what one is trying to do; and

f. Mentoring gives one as sense of responsibility.

Visit to a Middle School: A TEAM Scholar's Perspective.

VIGNETTE

" As I took a deep breath, I opened the classroom door to Mrs. Jones class for the Emotionally Handicapped. Not knowing what to expect, I was quite apprehensive about serving youngsters with special needs. I introduced myself, told the class what school I was from, and said that I was there to observe. The students seemed so interested in what I was saying, one asked the teacher if he could go to college one day. The teacher's reply was, ' I told you once before, that everyone will not go to college in this classroom.' The student, in turn, replied, ' Will I get a chance to go? Because I want to go.' The teacher replied, ' I just don't know.' My heart went out to this child; I just wanted to let the children know that if they stayed in school, strived to do well, they could one day attend college."

"At the end of the class period, I was able to further discuss the class with the teacher. She informed me that one third of the school's students are in programs for the emotionally handicapped, and a majority of the school's population is composed of minorities. Of the twelve students in the teacher's class, eleven were African- American descent and one was Puerto Rican. Many questions arose. What seems questionable was the fact that all of the students were minorities. That number of minority children in an EH classroom seemed astronomically high. Is it then, a question of ability, or a question of the system not meeting the needs of minority students?"

Early College Exploration. Each year the College of Education participates in an initiative called the Summer Career Exploration Modules (SCEM). This initiative, directed through the University's Office of Special Projects, seeks to expose above average minority high school students (with a minimum 2.5 grade point average) to careers in the fields of the Arts & Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, and Health. Students selected are rising 9th through 12th graders and must be residents of selected counties in the University of Central Florida's service area. Students reside on campus and work closely with counselors (college students) as they learn about career opportunities and the economic benefits of a college education. The Director

of the TEAM-UCF Project serves as the College of Education Coordinator. The six day modules provide workshops and activities related to: a college education- of what value?, financial aid, role models, and orientation to college life.

Recruitment/ Retention Strategies Conference. The purpose of the conference is to examine the obstacles minorities experience in teacher training programs and seek solutions for change. It brings together the coordinators and college deans of the Florida State University Consortium, public school principals, personnel officers, and community college retention officers. Upwards of 250 conferees attend this day long event on the University campus. Outstanding guest speakers, facilitators, and interested participants add to the dynamics of this informative event.

Statewide Recruitment Initiatives.

> *"I think of no higher calling than motivating young people to want to learn. Having spent many years in the classroom, I can attest to the joys and challenges which the teaching profession brings." - Frank Brogan State of Florida, Commissioner of Education*

To counter the trend toward the reduction in the number of minority educators, TEAM - Florida has begun a series of regional recruitment seminars entitled "Celebration of Teaching". Four seminars have been planned in strategic regions of the state. Each high school in the region has been requested to select four students, who have displayed an interest in teaching and who have the potential to become outstanding teachers, to participate in this seminars. One adult is invited to spend the day with these outstanding young people as they learn of our great profession. In addition to the high school students

and adults, each TEAM - Florida Consortium representative is there along with representatives from the host community. Each consortium member is responsible for one specific topic. It is a full day, all activities are free and refreshments and lunch are provided.

The seminar agenda includes the following:

*Message from the State Commissioner of Education
*Workshop session: Getting Ready & Getting Admitted
*After high school, what are my choices
*Test preparation
*Meeting the costs of college
*A motivational guest speaker
*Closing/ wrap - up session

Successful Recruitment/Retention Strategies: Community College

This section describes strategies that have been used in order to recruit and retain prospective teacher educators from community colleges. Even though there are many strategies one can use in order to identify and recruit prospective teacher educators from community colleges, the ones listed below have been used successfully in the recruitment and retention of minority students.

Identify a contact person at the college. At the University of Florida we have had more success in recruiting students when a contact person will identifies prospective students and recommends them to the TEAM coordinator. From this point the coordinator follows up this contact by communicating with the student and indicating the assistance that can be provided by the TEAM Project and the University.

The contact persons are not paid for this service. During the school year, they

receive a letter of thanks, a certificate, or a small token from the coordinator of the project. These persons are usually glad to assist in identifying the students and appreciate someone asking them to assist in recruiting prospective teachers.

Adequate tutorial Assistance must be provided for the students. Students from the community college are usually older than the average student; therefore, they are called NON-TRADITIONAL. We have found that many of these students have not been in school for several years, have families, and/or work full - time jobs. In order for them to succeed, tutorial services are provided weekly. These services are usually one-on-one and are conducted at times that are accessible for the students. For example, sessions are held during the lunch hour, on weekend, and any other time that the non-traditional students can find a few minutes to study.

Developing self concept. Some of the students do not believe they can achieve as well as younger students, therefore, they do not have a strong self concept. Every effort is made to assist students to develop a more positive self concept. In addition to the tutorial sessions, monthly meetings are held in order to assist students with any problems they might be experiencing. Examples of typical problems are as follows:

a. Students do not have enough time to study, and take care of a family, and succeed on the job;

b. Students need financial assistance for tuition, books, and other expenses;

c. Students fear failing a course;

d. Students' spouses become jealous because they are away from the house so often; and/or

e. Students feel that the professors do not understand their problems.

As the students begin to understand their professors, their grades usually improve. This improvement causes them to develop a better self-concept, thereby causing them to become more successful. As they progress in class, school becomes a family affair and the entire households try to assist the students to succeed in school.

This program is designed to identify, recruit, and assist in the graduation of students who are interested in teacher education. In an effort to encourage the participants to remain in the program, their tuition, books, and other expenses are paid by TEAM. In addition, when possible, the participants receive a small financial bonus in December.

Presently there are 20 students in the program. One community college graduate is now a senior in the UF in the Special Education Department. At the end of the 1996 Summer session, two additional students are expected to graduate and apply for admission to the University of Florida, College of Education.

TEAM/COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH

Since the fall of 1992, the Division of Community Colleges' staff has cooperated with staff of the Ford Minority Teachers Education Consortium toward the completion of a study on college retention and transfer issues affecting minority students in the Florida Community College System. The study, conducted by the Teacher Education for America's Minority (T.E.A.M.) project, was funded by the Ford Foundation.

This study has explored some critical factors which inhibit minority student retention and graduation from community colleges, and the likelihood to move on to state university teacher education programs. Of equal concern to T.E.A.M. officials were the reasons African-American students failed to complete the Associate in Arts degree.

As factors are examined that impact African-American student achievement in the community college, it should be noted that these institutions devote a large portion of the resources provided to them to raising the academic skill level of under prepared enrollees. Several issues affect the community colleges and enrollees alike. What affect will the reduction in the total number of credits that are needed to graduate have on the ability of these colleges to continue offering pre-college developmental studies?

The educational accountability of school districts on how well their graduates are prepared to do college work is most important. Moreover, the continued educational success, beyond high school, impacts African-Americans more than any other ethnic group. African-Americans seeking post secondary degrees are often denied admission into college or they are admitted with special conditions through remedial programs more than any other ethnic minority. As a result of the inability to perform well enough in basic math, writing, and reading skills,

African-Americans are more likely to become discouraged and drop out of the community college.

The 1995 report on Readiness for College, published by the Florida Department of Education, measures Florida's high school graduates performance levels in the areas mentioned above. Data show that 92 percent of the students who enrolled in a Florida public university were considered prepared to do college work. For the Florida community college enrollees, the report cited that 41 percent were deemed prepared for college. Thirty-six percent of Florida African-American post- secondary enrollees met the readiness criteria so stated in the report.

The report, prepared by the Florida Education and Traning Placement Program 90-91, 91-92, shows that thirty-four percent of the African-American Associate of Arts degree recipients did not transfer to an upper division institution immediately following graduation from community colleges. The questions yet to be answered are what happened to these students and do they eventually transfer to an upper level institution to complete a bachelors degree? In an effort to seek an answer, each T.E.A.M. Consortium institution wrote a personal letter to each graduate listed as having not transferred. Retracking these graduates of Florida's Community Colleges, a year later, we found that many did eventually transfer to a four year institution in Florida.

Also, we learned from a Florida Department of Education report that, students who returned to the community college after having successfully completed the freshman year of study were more likely to graduate. African-American male graduates tended to transfer into state university system institutions at a slightly higher rate than females. This information gave rise to the need to study factors that influence recruitment and retention of African-American students.

Each consortium institution agreed to work directly with one or more nearby community college(s) and to monitor the progress of data collection for the study. In addition, several community colleges that are large feeder institutions (of students into the upper division) were

included in the study although they are not located near a consortium institution. This phase of the study was conducted by a member of the Florida State University (FSU) consortium. The community colleges involved included: Miami-Dade Community College, Broward Community College, Hillsborough Community College, St. Petersburg Junior College, Tallahassee Community College, Gulf Coast Community College, Daytona Beach Community College, Central Florida Community College, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, Santa Fe Community College, Seminole Community College, Valencia Community College, and Chipola Junior College.

Survey

A survey was developed to investigate areas which impact academic success. This survey was distributed to 1,200 African-American community college students. Fifty-eight percent of the recipients returned the completed survey.

Students were asked to respond to a series of questions related to their self concept, work habits, educational activities and plans. Responses indicated several areas that are in critical need of improvement in order to better predict the academic success of larger numbers of African-American community college students. The critical areas identified in this study are as follows:

a. use of library;
b. time spent on campus outside of instruction;
c. study time;
d. hours spent working; and
e. students perceptions of their ability to do academic work.

The responses regarding use of the library were interesting. Eighty-one percent of the students indicated they used the library for five hours or fewer per week. The extent of non-usage was much greater than anticipated. However, these data suggest that there appears to be a correlation between number of hours respondents spent on campus outside of class and the

number of hours spent in the library.. Sixty-seven percent of the students spent five hours or less on campus when not in class.

It is true that community college students spend little time on campus outside of classes. This is typical of a community college population that tends to be older and employed. Also, African-American community college enrollees tended to show little participation in campus activities and organizations.

In any activity there is usually a benefit gained from the amount of effort devoted to its accomplishment. Students were asked to list the number of hours per week devoted to study. Fifty-eight percent stated that they averaged 10 or fewer total hours of study per week. Of special interest is that one quarter of all respondents studied 5 or fewer hours outside classes per week. An additional 32.7 percent averaged from 6 to 10 study hours. Twenty-seven percent of the students averaged study time of between eleven and twenty hours. Only 8.7 percent averaged greater than 20 hours per week. To an educational observer in the field, this does not reflect an adequate amount of study time to ensure success.

Findings indicate that the survey respondents were more likely to work twenty or more hours a week or not at all. Thirty-eight percent worked twenty or more hours per week and 39 percent worked 5 hours or less. Fifty-nine percent of the students surveyed worked six or more hours per week.

Students who held jobs overwhelmingly stated that the work experiences contributed very little to their educational development. However, work was necessary to help meet the costs of education, and engendered a sense of worthiness. Individual comments strongly suggested that students found "self-satisfaction" in their educational opportunity, work and family. These are indicators that the particular job may not contribute directly to their educational development, but indeed serves as a motivating factor in continuing education.

Students were asked to assess their academic abilities in a series of questions. One question

sough the students' own perceptions of their general academic ability. Fifty-three percent of the respondents indicated that their success depended upon high individual effort in their academic work. Seventeen percent felt that they possessed a high ability to achieve academically without excessive effort, and should do well in college. Eleven percent felt they lacked the effort and needed greater motivation. Five percent admitted a lack of academic ability. Fifteen percent did not respond to the question.

When asked the amount of study they felt necessary to be successful, twenty-five percent did not provide any response or were uncertain. Thirty-two percent felt they needed at least 10 hours per week to do well. Fifteen percent indicated that they needed between sixteen and twenty hours to do well. Seventeen percent felt they needed eleven to fifteen hours of study to do well. Nearly eleven percent felt that 20 or more hours of study would be needed in order to do well academically. The survey respondents seem not to have a realistic perception of the amount of study time necessary for academic success.

The underlying causes that inhibit African-American community college students from responding with greater certainty about their aspirations need to be examined more closely. Students enroll with great hope and expectation for success leading toward a better quality of life.

Students were asked to respond to a set of four self-assessment statements that centered on the theme of decision making. They were asked to indicate how closely each statement matched their own opinions on a range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

Eighty-one percent of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that ("people could easily change their decisions, even when their minds were made up on a subject"). The vast majority of the respondents thus indicate that they are individually capable of making decisions for themselves and reject the notion that others can easily dissuade them from their choices.

Respondents were asked to indicate their willingness to use tutoring services that are available on campus. Thirty-seven percent expressed agreement that they would use tutoring when available, and another twenty-three percent strongly agreed. Twenty-nine percent had no definite opinion. The earlier question on students' willingness to seek help was answered by an overwhelming majority affirmatively, yet only sixty-percent of respondents were affirmative regarding this statement on tutoring. It could be concluded that the statement may have confused some of the respondents since a very high percentage tend to be enrolled in developmental courses that already have close controls and tutoring as an integral component.

For many students, the community college is perceived as an institution of opportunity, in that enrollment is practically assured to them if they complete high school. The study sought to discover to what extent the respondents welcomed or desired a change to prove themselves academically. Fifty-seven percent responded that they strongly agreed with the statement, and another 29 percent agreed that the opportunity to prove themselves academically was important. Students felt that they could have made higher grades in high school had they put forth a greater effort.

Seventy-one percent of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their high school grades did not reflect their full potential to achieve academically. The majority of respondents indicated that the community college gave the opportunity for an academic "second chance". Twenty-two percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, suggesting that either they did quite well in their high school subjects, or that they believe they lacked the skill necessary to excel in academic work. Fifteen percent offered no opinion regarding their high school work. The question then remains: What are the factors that prohibit students from performing at their best level prior to enrolling in a post secondary institution?

We wanted to know to what extent African-American community college students were able to formulate their goals. Respondents were asked to list three goals they had set for themselves.

The overwhelming majority of responses indicated a desire to receive a bachelor's degree, to obtain a good job, and to be able to support a family. Among the younger African-American students, there remained a strong emphasis on family support and improving their quality of life. Despite what is commonly said about today's minority youth, the "work ethic" and respect for the family and self remained high priorities. A desire to become independent was directly correlated with the desire to be able to sustain self and family. Also, of high importance, were increased educational opportunity and a renewed interest in spirituality that was expressed along with the prospects of educational advancement. Ownership of a business was frequently mentioned among the responses. Not only was the goal to finish college, but to obtain academic honors as well.

Respondents were asked to list three of the accomplishments they were most proud of having achieved. Graduation from high school and enrollment in community college were two frequently mentioned milestones of achievement. High among the responses mentioned were to get their lives on track and in order and to gain their independence. Several respondents stated that mastering certain academic skills was a source of personal satisfaction. Athletic performance and participation, whether in high school or college, was a source of pride. To be alive was an accomplishment for some respondents.

There were an array of other responses, including: raising a child, achieving honors status, passing an examination, purchasing a car, being a positive influence for others and giving something back as a volunteer to the community. The benefit of accomplishment, however small , clearly seemed to bring out the best in the lives of people. In these responses, entering college to prepare for a new career was a strong motivating factor. Being able to attend college clearly had given these respondents a positive picture of themselves and had elevated their self-esteem. It must also be remembered that even small successes have a significant place in this process.

The survey sought to ascertain the kinds of organizations respondents participated in while attending high school and to discover whether they held leadership roles.

As high school students, community college enrollees participated in a wide array of activities, both in school and in the community. It should be noted that a high percentage of individuals failed to respond to this question. Of those who did respond, African-American students took part in student government, inter-collegiate organizations, honor clubs, black student organizations, drama, band, choral ensembles, religious groups, and athletic clubs. These students also volunteered for community services and cultural organizations.

Spirit of Voulunteerism:

Community college enrollees have a history of volunteering to help others in their communities. These services vary according to location.

In the case of Tallahassee Community College, students would volunteer with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Miami-Dade Community College students volunteered mostly in churches, hospitals, and community bands.

Importance of Support Systems

In the case of Brevard Community College, there was a strong involvement of students in the African-American community organization, i.e., Del-Teens, Charmettes, Masons, FBLA, YPD, and others. Daytona Beach Community College students were involved in religious organizations, community athletic teams, N.A.C.P., Meals on Wheels, Sickle-Cell Foundation, Save the Children, F.F.E.A., 4-H Clubs, French Club, Amnesty International, Health Occupations Service Association, Key Club, A.S.U., Debate Club, Pep Club, Men of Tomorrow and Florida Education Association.

Hillsborough Community College and St. Petersburg Junior College students were involved in the McKnight and Ebony Scholars programs. Students at these institutions were typical of community college students as a whole in that they tended to participate in similar kinds of activities.

Further Investigation

Of particular value for future investigation were responses received to a question which asked if students were to withdraw from the community college prior to completion, what the students most likely causes would be. There were nine options from which to choose, including a blank for an "other" response. In addition, we wanted to know how definite the respondents were about attaining their B.A./B.S. degree.

Forty-one percent of the respondents stated that they were absolutely certain of obtaining their bachelor's degree. This finding is somewhat surprising, in that the remaining fifty-nine percent are therefore uncertain that they will go on to receive their bachelors degree. This data is in a direct opposition to the responses given earlier.

Things that would impact upon the respondent's ability to continue to work towards the four-year degree, as listed in the survey, are as follows:

a. accepting a good job;
b ability to meet the cost to continue education beyond community college; and
c. marriage or family considerations.